

Enrolment Policy

■ Introductory Statement

This policy was formulated as a result of a review of the previous policy carried out by the school staff in collaboration with the Board of Management during the 1st term of the school year 2017 -2018 and ratified in the 2nd term of 2017 -2018. A draft was written up by the School Principal and published on the school website. Submissions were invited from interested parties i.e. parents, board members and staff. As a result of these collaborations a final draft was prepared and ratified by the board on the 8th, February 2018.

■ Rationale

Section 15(2) (d) Education Act, 1998 provides that a Board shall publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron considers appropriate, the policy of the school concerning admission to and participation in the school. The enrolment policy is central to the school's working and development. It was decided to set down criteria and procedures for the enrolment of new pupils to ensure the smooth administration of admissions to St. Aidan's National School.

General Information

Name : St. Aidan's National school

Address: Hollyfield, Ballintrillick, Co. Sligo.

Tel. No.: 0719176665

- St. Aidan's National School is Catholic in denomination and is under the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Kilmore.
- St. Aidan's National School is a vertical co-educational primary school catering for boys and girls in classes from Junior Infants to 6th Class.
- St. Aidan's National School follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and operates within the regulations laid down by the DES.
- St. Aidan's National School depends on the grants and teacher resources provided by the Department of Education.

■ Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

It is our wish to provide a learning environment, which is conducive to the academic, social, physical, psychological and moral development of the children under our care. To this end three general aims permeate our educational process:

- To enable the children to live full lives as children.
- To equip them to avail of further education.
- To prepare them to live full and useful lives as adults.

Underpinning our educational philosophy, and with particular reference to our pupils' moral development, is the school's Catholic Ethos of which we hold as central and integral to school life. We welcome enrolments from pupils of other religious persuasions or no religion at all. We embrace and cherish all children equally and respect their rights to whatever religious beliefs or lack of beliefs they have. We expect the same respect to be accorded to the children of the majority Catholic faith. Section 7(3)(c) Equal Status Act, 2000 states that an educational establishment does not discriminate if it admits children of one particular religious denomination in preference to others, or if it refuses to admit a child who is not of that denomination, provided any such refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school. It is our policy not to discriminate against prospective enrolees on the grounds of gender, family status, age, disability, race and the travelling community.

■ Aims

- To ensure that all pupils are properly enrolled in an open, transparent manner and in accordance with the procedures set out in the policy.
- To put in place criteria under which applications shall be considered and to ensure that these criteria are informed by our Ethos, our Mission Statement & current legislation.
- To make parents/carers aware of our philosophy, ethos and rules governing the conduct expected of their children while in our care.
- To ensure that enrolees are not discriminated against on any of the grounds stated above.
- To inform parents about the school, its programmes, activities, and procedures.
- To specify what information is required by the school at the time of application.

■ Guidelines (*content of policy*)

GENERAL POLICY :

It is generally the policy of St. Aidan's National School to enrol its new pupils once a year. This is usually done at the beginning of the school year in order to minimise disruption and ensure smooth administration.

ENROLMENT REQUIREMENTS :

St. Aidan's National School is a Catholic school that welcomes all applications from parents or guardians to enrol children regardless of race, religious belief or lack of religious belief. However, there are a number of stipulations, some Department initiated and others school based, which we insist upon to make for smooth administration and a harmonious school environment.

- (1) All enrolees must be **at least** four years of age before attending school. **The Board of Management of St. Aidan's National School strongly recommends that children should have attained the age of 4 years by the 31st March in the year of intended enrolment. This is to ensure that children are old enough to begin formal mainstream schooling.**
- (2) All enrolees must be registered by having the official school enrolment form (Appendix A) filled and signed by their parents or guardians.
- (3) Completion of a school enrolment application form is an acceptance of the St. Aidan's Code of Conduct.
- (4) All enrolees must have the appropriate textbooks and necessary materials before attending school.
- (5) Enrolment of students with special needs will be deferred until appropriate support services are put in place.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Pupils are generally enrolled for the forthcoming school year during early spring for attendance in September. Enrolment forms, Code of Behaviour, booklists and any other relevant information are available to the parents or guardians of prospective enrolees from the school directly. An Open Day is arranged in early Spring and the parents of prospective enrolees are invited to come with their children to view the facilities, meet the teachers and sample some activities in an informal setting. The Open Day is advertised in the local media and enrolment forms are available on the day. These are filled and signed and returned to the school with an original birth/adoption certificate before the end of May.

The closing date for applications will be three months from the date of the Open Day. This is to encourage prospective parents to enrol their children in a timely fashion and also enable the school to apply for extra resources if there is such a need.

Where the school requires further information, the application will not be treated as being complete until such time as all requested information, has been received. The school will inform the applicants of the information and documentation required.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS:

The completion of an application form or the placement of your child's name on an intake or waiting list, however early, does not confer an automatic right to a place in the school. The Board of Management of the school will make a decision in respect of an application within 21 days of the closing date for applications and parents will be informed by email (Appendix B). No child is refused admission for reasons of ethnicity, special educational needs, disability, language/accents, gender, traveller status, asylum-seeker/refugee status, religious/political beliefs and values, family or social circumstances.

ENROLMENT CRITERIA:

While recognising the rights of the parents to enrol their child in the school of their choice, the Board of Management of St. Aidan's National School also respects the rights of the existing school community and in particular, the children already enrolled. This requires balanced judgements, which are guided by the principles of natural justice and acting in the best interest of the children.

To assist the school in circumstances of overcrowding, the Board of Management reserves the right to determine the maximum number of children in each separate classroom bearing in mind Department of Education and Science guidelines in relation to class size and staffing provisions.

Other factors that may be considered are:

- Size of and available space in classrooms.
- Educational needs of children of a particular age.
- Multi-grade classes.
- Presence of children with special educational/behavioural needs.
- Department of Education & Science class size directives.
- Appropriate Supports and Resources are available.
- Time of school year.

Health and Safety Concerns regarding Staff and Children.

With regard to criteria for enrolment, the priority order in which children will be accepted, in situations where St. Aidan's National School is oversubscribed and/or where the child's needs cannot be met under the school's current provision of support services and facilities e.g. for a child with Special Needs, is as follows:

1. Siblings of pupils who currently attend or formerly attended the school.
2. Catholic children living within the parish boundary.
3. Other children living within the parish boundary.
4. Children of current staff, including ancillary staff.
5. Children of past pupils of the school.
6. Catholic children living outside the parish boundary.
7. Other children living outside the parish boundary.

In the event that there are more applicants within any category than there are available places, priority will be given to children within the particular category using the criteria of age and geographical proximity.

ENROLMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

St. Aidan's National School promotes the inclusion of children with Special Needs and has successfully integrated many pupils with varying needs into mainstream education. The success of our inclusion programme is fully dependant on acquiring the services necessary for the child's special needs to be catered for and for there to be no significant negative impact on the educational opportunities of other children. It is therefore our policy to ascertain through our Enrolment Form, whether or not a prospective enrollee has Special Needs. Where there is a Special Need, necessitating extra services, all relevant information and reports will be requested and an application will be made to the (NCSE) for the necessary Resource Teaching Hours and/or Special Needs Assistant access.

The Board of Management (BOM) of St. Aidan's upholds the constitutional right of children with Special Needs to be provided with the supports and/or physical infrastructure necessary to integrate them appropriately into mainstream education. It also endorses the constitutional right of **all** of its children to an equal and appropriate education in a safe learning environment and free from serious disruption. Therefore, in cases where the Board feels that the child's special needs cannot be adequately met from the Special Needs provisions and/or physical infrastructure available in the school or that other pupils' educational opportunities will be severely compromised, it reserves the right not to proceed with an enrolment.

REFUSAL TO ENROL ON GROUNDS OF 'EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES':

The BOM reserves the right to refuse enrolment in exceptional circumstances e.g. a)

As per previous paragraph.

b) The pupil has special needs such that, even with additional resources available from DES, the school cannot meet such needs and/or provide the pupil with an appropriate education.

In the opinion of the BOM, a pupil poses an unacceptable risk to other pupils, school staff and/or school property.

RIGHT OF APPEAL:

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 provides for a right of appeal against a decision to refuse enrolment. Parents/guardians are informed of their right to appeal a decision of the BOM in relation to a refusal to enrol in the Letter of Regret (Appendix C). The Principal has responsibility for preparing a response for the Appeals Committee if and when an appeal is initiated.

PUPIL TRANSFER:

Pupils may transfer to the school at any time subject to the school's enrolment policy and available space. The parents/guardian(s) will be asked to provide relevant information from the child's previous school including progress reports, attendance records, behaviour records and any other assessments that are deemed relevant. When a pupil has transferred to St. Aidan's National School and has been registered, the school will inform the child's previous school.

APPROVAL OF PATRON:

Section 15(2)(d) of the Education Act 1998 requires a Board of Management to publish, in such manner as the board with the agreement of the patron, considers appropriate

- the policy of the school concerning enrolment to and participation in the school including those with special needs
- the policy of the school relating to the expulsion and suspension of students

The Board of Management must ensure that the principles of equality and the right of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice are respected and such directions as may be made from time to time by the Minister, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school and the constitutional rights of all persons concerned, are complied with.

This policy and the Code of Behaviour, which deals with matters of suspension and expulsion, are available in the school.

■ Success Criteria

Our success criteria will be based on the achievement of our objectives. We will use staff observation and parental feedback as our benchmark for success or otherwise of the policy. The effectiveness of the policy will be judged on the ease of administration with regard to pupil intake.

■ Roles and Responsibility

The Board of Management and the school principal will be responsible for the implementation and evaluation of the policy. Any feedback received will be recorded and any problems that arise will be taken into account for the purposes of evaluation and review.

■ **Timeframe for Implementation**

This policy will be implemented from February 2018

■ **Responsibility for Review**

The school principal and post-holders in conjunction with the Board of Management will be responsible for reviewing the policy.

■ **Ratification and Communication**

The Board of Management ratified this policy on the _____ of _____.

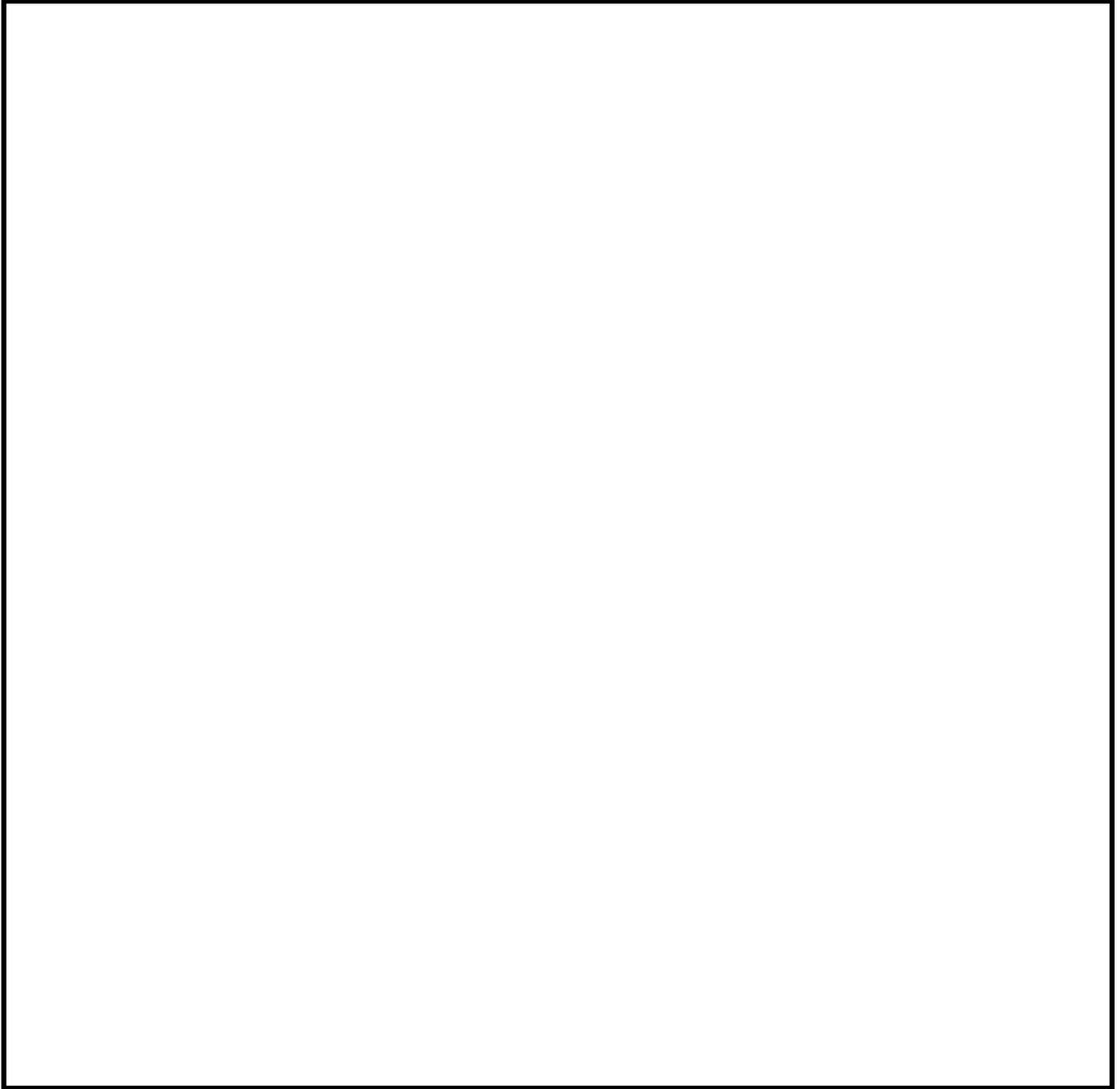
Signed: _____, (Chairperson, BOM)

The policy is communicated to the members of the BOM and is available to the wider school community through the school website. All St. Aidan's policies are available for inspection in the school.

This policy will be reviewed during the school year 2020/21.



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Appendix A

Enrolment Form

Appendix B

Re.: St. Aidan's National School Enrolment Application 20XX-20XX

Dear _____,

Thank you for your application to enrol your child _____ in St. Aidan's National School in September, 20XX.

We are delighted to inform you that your application has been successful and we have a place for your child. We look forward to welcoming him/her to our school in September.

Please contact the school within the next 10 days to confirm that you are availing of this place. When places are limited, if your child's place is not confirmed, it will be offered to the next child on the list.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Harrison (Principal)

Appendix C

Re.: St. Aidan's National School Enrolment Application 20XX

Dear _____,

Thank you for your application to enrol your child in St. Aidan's National School in September, 20XX.

Unfortunately, we are unable to offer your child(ren) a place(s) at this time due to the following reasons.

Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 provides for a right of appeal against a decision to refuse enrolment. The procedure is set out on the DES website 'www.education.ie' and in DES Circular 22/2002.

I regret that we are not in a position to provide you with a place(s) at this time and I wish you well in finding a suitable alternative. If the current situation changes for any reason, we will get in touch with you again.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Harrison (Principal)